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INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: CASC CMGT ASEC BG
SUBJECT: PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT - BANGLADESH

This Public Announcement is being issued to alert U.S. citizens to the potential for escalating civil unrest in Bangladesh. Those residing in or traveling to Bangladesh are urged to use extra care and precaution while in the country. This Public Announcement expires on November 22, 2004.

U.S. and international media have recently reported unrest in various parts of Bangladesh following an assassination attempt on August 21 in downtown Dhaka, involving grenades and gun fire, on opposition political leader Sheikh Hasina and senior members of her Awami League party. At least 19 persons were killed in the attempt, and 200 were reported injured. The assault has sparked multiple incidents of street violence, including vehicle burning, in Dhaka and several other cities. Localized strikes have occurred or are occurring in Chittagong, Pabna, Jhalokhati, Faridpur, Shariatpur, Gopalgonj, Narayangonj, Madaripur, and Sylhet. On August 22, a train was firebombed in Bhairab, a railroad junction 100 kilometers northeast of Dhaka, after false rumors that one of the injured Awami League leaders had died. There are no reports of injuries to American citizens as a result of the assassination attempt or the subsequent incidents.

The Awami League and its political partners have called for nationwide strikes on August 24 and 25, 2004. There is a strong potential for widespread violence during these strikes, when strike supporters may attempt to close virtually all institutions and businesses in major urban areas, and prevent the normal circulation of vehicular traffic. The strikes are not expected, however, to affect normal life in Baridhara and Gulshan, the so-called diplomatic areas of Dhaka.

The Embassy is advising all Americans in or traveling to Bangladesh to take extra care and precaution while going out in public and to be cognizant of the current situation.

American citizens in Bangladesh should remain vigilant, particularly in public places where spontaneous demonstrations might arise. They are further advised to avoid all demonstrations and large crowds and consider

postponing travel to areas that may become potential "hotspots" for demonstrations.

U.S. citizens planning to travel to Bangladesh should consult the Department of State's Consular Information Sheet for Bangladesh and the most recent Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, which are available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. American citizens may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States, and (317) 472-2328 from overseas.

U.S. citizens visiting or resident in Bangladesh are encouraged to register with the U.S. embassy, where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within Bangladesh. Security updates are e-mailed to all registered Americans with an e-mail address. American citizens may complete a registration form on-line at <http://travelregistration.state.gov>. During normal business hours American citizens may call the U.S. embassy in Dhaka at (880-2) 882-3805; for after-hours emergencies call (880-2)-885-5500, dial "0" and ask for the duty officer. The fax number of the consular section is (880-2) 882-4449. The U.S. Embassy is located in the diplomatic enclave north of downtown Dhaka, at Madani Avenue, Baridhara, Dhaka 1212. The embassy's workweek is Sunday through Thursday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The American citizens services (ACS) unit is open from 1:00 pm to 4 pm, Sunday through Thursday except for American and most local holidays.

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